1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger



'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and *tunga* which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggā as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggā, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

| *Commodity* | *Profit per day* |
|---|---|
| Straw hats | 1*d.* |
| Grass-mats, oval | 1*d.* |
| Grass-mats, square | 1½*d.* |
| Mats made of stalk | 1½*d.* |
| Caps, embroidered | 2*d.* |
| Saddle-cloth, plain | 3*d.* |
| Saddle-cloth, embroidered | 4*d.* |
| Caps, machine-made | 8*d.* |
| Gowns, machine-made | 1*s.* 10*d.* |
| Gowns, embroidered | 3*s.* 0*d.* |

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *koni* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s*. to 15*s*., the material costing 5*s*.; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d*. and 3*d*. This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52



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286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[33] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the " refining " of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[34]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[35]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

*Straw-hat makers* use a " shape " of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a " lazy " occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

*Leather-workers* formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[36]

305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a " closed " craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also " *medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[37]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[33] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[34] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[35] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[37] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida, whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, i.e., shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,